



## WESTPORT CONNECTICUT

### REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

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Submitted by Marla J. Cowden, Democratic Registrar of Voters, Westport

### Testimony to the GAE Committee – Public Hearing, February 6, 2015

#### SB-848 AAC POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES.

Greetings, Senator Cassano, Senator Gerratana, and members of the GAE Committee. I am Marla Cowden, Democratic Registrar for the Town of Westport. I speak only for myself in this testimony. I wish to submit testimony on **SB-848 AAC POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES**.

While I support this bill in concept, and in Westport we are eager to consolidate polling places for primaries, certain provisions of the bill make it unlikely that we would be able to take advantage of the opportunity and affect cost savings.

I have long supported allowing municipalities the opportunity to consolidate polling places during primaries. Much money is currently wasted in Westport on opening seven or nine polling places (Federal & Local, respectively) when we can only justify one based on turnout.

However, I believe the current bill, SB 848, is in need of some improvements.

#### Timeline

- Current statutes give the Secretary of the State (SOTS) until the 27<sup>th</sup> day before a primary to certify petitioning candidates. SB 848 requires candidates to object to consolidation by the 30<sup>th</sup> day. Voters must be notified of consolidation by the 25<sup>th</sup> day before the primary. That gives Registrars of Voters (ROVs) a five day window in which to prepare and post a mailing to the entire voter registry, at a time when ROVs are working overtime to prepare for the primary.
- There are activities that need to be completed prior to the 30<sup>th</sup> day before a primary that require ROVs to know whether (using Westport as the example) we would be preparing for one poll or for nine polls:
  - Ordering of absentee ballots
  - Ordering of tabulator cards
  - Preparation of all the paperwork and supplies for a poll
  - Reservation of polling place locations

# Primary Poll Consolidation Analysis

Westport, CT

2004 - Present

Primary Date	Primary Type	Turnout at Polls	Polls Used	Polls Needed
August 12, 2014	Republican Gubernatorial	783	7	1Poll
August 14, 2012	Dual US Senate	2487	6	1 Poll, 3 lines
April 24, 2012	Republican Presidential	719	6	1 Poll
August 10, 2010	Dual Gubernatorial	2892	6	1 Poll, 3 lines
September 15, 2009	Republican First Selectman	1270	9	1 Poll
August 12, 2008	Democratic Congressperson	552	6	1 Poll
February 5, 2008	Dual Presidential	5783	6	2 Polls, 3 lines each
August 8, 2006	Democratic Gubernatorial	2743	6	1 Poll, 3 lines
September 13, 2005	Republican First Selectman	1182	9	1 Poll
March 2, 2004	Democratic Presidential	1992	6	1Poll, 2 lines